

John Henry was my first flying instructor. It was a tragedy made even more tragic by the fact, with all those hours of flying, that John would have to die in a motor-car.

And if that is not enough, the other couple who died in the other vehicle were Murrurundi locals. The wife was born and raised on our next-door neighbouring property, 'The Big Flat' (Scotts Creek).

She was one of ten children.

Further, the tragedy must also be viewed with the coincidence that this woman's youngest brother died in a car crash near the same spot, aged 21, about ten years earlier.

Vale John Henry

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S FINEST PILOTS Flying Instructor

The Uniting Church, Quirindi was packed and overflowing with mourners, and a flypast of light planes took place, as a fitting tribute to one of Australia's finest pilots during the funeral service for the late Arthur John Henry, recently.

The late Mr Henry was killed in a tragic multiple motor fatality near Duri on the afternoon of Anzac Day.

The funeral service was conducted by Rev. W. Lockhart, assisted by Rev. J. Fincher.

In addressing the large congregation the Rev. John Fincher said that John Henry was one of Australia's great pilots, with an outstanding record in Wartime both as an Operational Pilot and later as a Test Pilot.

After the war he continued flying, and was a Captain with East West Airlines.

More recently he served as a Flying Instructor for the Royal Newcastle Aero Club, as well as the Tamworth and Quirindi Aero Clubs.

John joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1942 and trained in Australia and Canada.

He did his tour of Operations on Lancasters with 103 Squadron, R.A.F.

For his skill and courage he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross of his first sortie as a Captain.

His target was Stuttgart, his aircraft was attacked and severely damaged by an enemy fighter, and the rear gunner was gravely wounded.

John and his brothers David and Gavin were all attached to the same R.A.F. Squadron in England.

All three Henry brothers took part in the 1000 bomber raid on Cologne.

John was on his last trip [his 33rd], David on his 23rd, and Gavin on his first Operational flight.

The brothers were affectionately known on the Squadron as Henry Mark 1, Henry Mark 11, and Henry Mark 111.

After completing his tour of operations in 1945, John was attached to the A.V. Roe Company as a Test Pilot, flying Lincolns and Lancasters.

He flew to Australia on the Lincoln Development Flight in 1946.

When discharged from the Royal Australian Air Force he had logged over 1,000 hours.

Whilst with East West Airlines, John logged over 10,000 hours on the Company's aircraft and was engaged in the initial rain-making experiments with the C.S.I.R.O.

John Henry had recorded over 23,000 flying hours - this represents roughly two and three quarter years in the air!

He was endorsed to pilot 50 different types of aircraft in 36 years of flying - ranging from Tiger Moths, Lancasters, Mosquitoes, to Cessnas, Austers and Beechcraft.

He was one of the most experienced small aircraft pilots in Australia, and had the unique gift of being able to engender a confidence and something of his own natural ability into all his students.

It has been conservatively estimated that he taught in excess of 500 students to fly.

John's courage in Wartime and his dedication to flying won him recognition and admiration both from the Royal Australian Air Force and from Airmen throughout the whole of the state.

Rev. Fincher said that the Chairman of East West Airlines asked him to convey his sympathy and to apologise for his absence.

He said " John Henry was one of the finest men I have ever known: a person of sterling character, a very fine pilot as he proved to be during his war service and during his years with East West.

He was an inspiration to other pilots under him and will be sadly missed by all who knew him."

Sincere sympathy is extended to his family in their bereavement.

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Mr Stan R Scone Senic Friends Soci well known town, suffer Thursday, a recovering in Hospital.

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